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November 15, 1963

OFFICIAL - INFORMAL

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Dear Pete:

I wonder if you could tell me as soon as possible what thought, if any, has been given in the field to the possible use of a tank dozer to attempt to remove APCs blocking the autobahn. I saw a certain amount of traffic on this during the October 10-12 incident but have seen nothing since then.

As you know, FREE STYLE C has a tank dozer. SHLO 500229 notwithstanding, I personally would not entirely rule out at least the deployment of a tank dozer in the vicinity of Soviet APCs. I do not know whether governments would want to authorize the use of a dozer to remove the APCs but I suspect that this is a hypothetical question, since I would guess that the Soviets would bring tanks into the picture if we even looked like we were going to use a tank dozer against an APC. Even this, however, would have the advantage of raising the level of the confrontation, if this seemed to be a more desirable course of action than other alternatives available.

The thought has occurred to me that if the blockage took place at the Babelsburg checkpoint, it might be useful at some point in the scenario to consider having a tank dozer moved to a point near the scene of the crime on a prime mover.

I suspect, however, that you all have already given considerable more thought to this question than I have and it would be useful to me to know how you came out.

As I look back on the past month it seems to me that we have thus far not come out too badly. You can imagine that I am personally happy about having agreed procedures among the Allies. I believe that this exercise paid for itself when the British sent that convoy on November 5. It also seems to me that despite minor difficulties the Allies have worked better together in harness this time than in any of our previous exercises.

Arthur R. Day, Esquire,
Chief, Political Affairs Section,
U.S. Mission, Berlin.

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I have also been heartened by the solid support which we have received from Ambassador Thompson, the Secretary, and the President. While I recognize that some of the detailed guidance you have received has from your point of view been unnecessary, I consider this relatively unimportant when compared to the general support which we have received.

We appear to have gotten nearer this time to the application of countermeasures than ever before. Despite this, I find myself increasingly reluctant to inject the question of countermeasures into the discussion too early in the game, for fear that it will distract people from the main problem. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of interest in the question of countermeasures at the policy level, and this has provided a new impulse to our Quadrant (non-military countermeasures) and SEASPRAY exercises. The Secretary told General Harris of LIVE OAK the other day that he felt very strongly that if there is another convoy detention we must take countermeasures against the Soviets. You will see, however, from the report of our November 13 Ambassadorial Group meeting that the British are still somewhat less than enthusiastic.

As far as I could see, both the Bonn Group and the Missions in Berlin worked very effectively. LIVE OAK, on the other hand, is apparently not the same organization that it used to be. We were very impatient about the slowness of LIVE OAK on November 4 to assemble FREE STYLE and their haste to send the boys home once the British and French convoys went through on November 8. I discussed this with General Harris when he was here, and I think he now understands why we wanted FREE STYLE to remain in place until our convoy went on November 12. He was apparently proceeding on the assumption that the Soviets would let it go through, whereas we were considerably less certain of that. In any event, we thought keeping FREE STYLE assembled might encourage the Soviets to take it easy.

As usual after an exercise there is the usual temptation in some quarters to take all the plans apart and scatter them all over the countryside. We are, however, firmly resisting this. If someone has some concrete proposals to make we will be glad to consider them, but in the meantime we have no intention of tearing up plans which were put together with such effort over so many years.

We are looking into the communications problems which you raised in your letter and will in due course inform you of the results of our efforts.

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I find Jack Coffey, the new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Communications, a very cooperative fellow, and I think that the net result of our efforts will be to solve at least some of your problems.

I should appreciate your writing me when you have time and giving me any reflections on the autobahn exercise thus far. (I would also be glad to hear anything that Jim, Sam and Alan have to say.)

Sincerely,

John C. Ausland

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